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PRINCETON
IN
AMERICAN HISTORY

PROFESSOR WM. M. SLOANE

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BY

PROFESSOR WM. M. SLOANE

BY

ALEXANDER HALL

ON

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PRINCETON IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

BY WM. M. SLOANE.

Princeton is by no means one of the oldest settlements in the State, and yet it has a history of two centuries, the first homestead having been established here in 1682. Although situated midway, or nearly so, between the two largest Colonial towns, and nearly equidistant from the head of navigation on two important streams, the Raritan and the Delaware, it remained a quiet and unimportant hamlet for over half a century. Most of the travel between New York and Philadelphia went by way of Perth Amboy and Camden; there was little to interrupt the humble labors of the settlers in clearing the forest and tilling the soil.

Yet the roll call of Princeton's pioneers reveals names which are now synonymous with patriotism and famous wherever American history is studied: Stockton, Paterson, Boudinot, Randolph, and others almost as renowned. Their instinctive Americanism is first recorded in a successful protest to the provincial authorities against the quartering of British troops in their humble homes during the French and Indian war.

Twelve years earlier, on October 22, 1746, the College of New Jersey had been chartered by Governor Hamilton, an act notable in American history because the first of its kind performed without authorization from England or the consent even of the provincial legislature. The institution was opened under President Dickinson in May 1747, at Elizabethtown. After his death, which occurred in October of the same year, the few students were transferred to Newark and put under the care of the Rev. Aaron Burr, one of the twelve trustees. On the fourteenth of the following September, Jonathan Belcher, just appointed governor, granted a

new charter fuller and more formal than the first. His interest in the college was from the outset very great, and his opinion, already formed, that Princeton was the most desirable spot for its permanent site, ultimately prevailed, the citizens of the hamlet proving more active and liberal than those of New Brunswick, already a good-sized town, to which like-wise terms were proposed "for fixing the college in that place."

Thereafter the little settlement grew rapidly and soon became a considerable village. In 1756 the new buildings were virtually completed and the college was transferred to its future home. Notable men from throughout the State and from both the cities of New York and Philadelphia became interested in the new seat of learning. More noteworthy still were those who taught and those who studied in it. Within a decade after the completion of Nassau Hall the names of Burr, Edwards, Witherspoon, of Livingston, Rush and Ellsworth, of James Manning, Luther Martin and Nathaniel Niles became Princeton names. The stream of influential patronage having been established, it remained constant until long after the Revolution. It included men from New England on the one hand, and from the South on the other, with of course a powerful element from the Middle States.

Princeton College is the child of Yale. But the parting was not entirely amicable. Theological controversy grew very fierce even for the Connecticut Valley in the days of Whitefield's preaching. The Conservative or Old Lights held the reins and were not kindly disposed toward the innovators or New Lights. The trouble culminated in the expulsion from Yale of David Brainerd because, defying the Faculty's express command, he attended New Light meetings and would not profess penitence for his fault. This occurred in 1739; thereafter an ever stronger feeling of discontent smouldered among the liberal Calvinists until finally the way was clear for founding a new training-school for the ministry and the learned professions on broad and gen-

erous lines. Brainerd became a most successful and famous missionary, was betrothed to the daughter of Jonathan Edwards and died at her father's house, a victim of his own laborious and devoted life, less than a year after the College of New Jersey was founded by a body of liberal minded men of all orthodox religious denominations, under the influence of a few leaders who sympathized with both himself and the Edwards theology. The first charter was granted by an Episcopalian governor to four Presbyterian clergymen, and one of the original trustees was a Quaker. Governor Belcher, who enlarged the charter and made the College "his adopted daughter," was a man of the most catholic feeling. Fourteen of the trustees under the permanent constitution were Presbyterian clergymen, an arrangement corresponding to the similar one whereby the majority of the governing body of Yale was composed of Congregational ministers. This wise guardianship has kept the two universities true to their traditions and the flourishing condition of both is the strongest proof anywhere afforded that temporal affairs do not necessarily suffer when committed to the charge of spiritual advisers. Considerable sums of money were raised in England by the personal solicitation of Tennent and Davies, two clergymen sent out for the purpose by the Trustees. The ten laymen of the first Princeton board represented various orthodox denominations, including Episcopalians and Quakers. There is not a syllable in the charter concerning creeds, confessions or religious tests. It is very significant of the vast improvement in public morality that a college founded under such auspices a hundred and fifty years ago was partly endowed and supported by lotteries authorized and drawn both in Connecticut and New Jersey.

From the day when the College was installed in its grand new home, history-making went on apace in Princeton. Nassau Hall was a majestic building for those days: distinguished foreign visitors to America all noted its dimensions

and architecture in their written accounts of travel; and indeed even now, with the tasteless alterations of chimneys, roof and towers made necessary by fire and carried through with ruthless economy, it may be considered one of the great monumental college buildings in America. It is, however, far more than this; we assert, without fear of contradiction that it has no peer as the most historic university pile in the world. This contention rests on the fact that it saw the discomfiture of the British at the ebb-tide of the American rebellion, harbored the government of the United States in its critical moments and cradled the Constitution makers of the greatest existing republic. No other university hall has been by turns fortress and barrack, legislative chamber and political nursery in the birththroes of any land comparable to our land.

The building was designed to be complete in itself; it contained lodgings for a hundred and forty-seven students, with a refectory, library and chapel. The class which entered under Dickinson, the first president, had six members, of whom five became clergymen. His untimely death a year after his election made his administration the shortest but one in the College history. During the ten years of Burr's tenure of office (1747–1757) the total number of students was a hundred and fourteen; half of them entered the ministry. The short presidency of Jonathan Edwards lasted but a few months. It gave the glory of his name, that of America's greatest metaphysician, to the College, the sacred memories of his residence to the venerable mansion now occupied by the Dean, and the hallowed custody of his mortal remains to the Princeton graveyard, a spot to which thousands have made a pilgrimage for the sake of his great renown. In this enclosure he lies beside his son-in-law, the Rev. Aaron Burr, who was his predecessor. At his feet are the ashes of the brilliant and erratic grandson, the Aaron Burr so well-known to students of American history. President Davies, who followed Edwards, held his office for only two years, and was suc-

ceeded by Finley who presided for five. Under the latter the number of students present at one time rose to one hundred and twenty. All told, a hundred and thirty sat under his instruction, and of these less than half, fifty-nine, became clergymen.

This tendency to send fewer and fewer men into the ministry is highly significant. It reached its climax under the next president—the great Scotchman whose name is among the most honored in the history of his adopted country—John Witherspoon. His incumbency was coincident with the revolutionary epoch, lasting from 1768–1794. In those twenty-six years four hundred and sixty-nine young men graduated from the College; of these, only a hundred and fourteen, less than a quarter, became clergymen, an average of between four and five a year. This phenomenon was due to the fact that Witherspoon, though lecturing on Divinity like his predecessors was vastly more interested in political than in religious philosophy. So notorious was this fact that many a pious youth bent on entering the ministry passed the very doors of liberal Princeton to seek the intenser atmosphere of Yale orthodoxy, while many a boy patriot from New England came hither to seek the distinction of being taught by Dr. Witherspoon.

The first eight years of Witherspoon's presidency embraced the period of political ferment in the colonies which ushered in the war of the Revolution. From the very beginning of his residence in America, the new president espoused the colonial cause in every conflict with Great Britain; he was soon accounted “as high a son of liberty as any man in America.” Not content with enlarging and renovating the College course, he collected funds throughout the colonies from Boston to Charleston, and even laid Jamaica under contribution to fill the depleted College chest. From the pulpit of the old First Church his voice rang out in denunciation of the English administration until in his native land he was branded as a rebel and a traitor. The

spread of the Reformation was more largely due to the fact that Luther was a professor in the University of Wittenberg than to any other single cause, the adherence to the Revolution of the powerful Scotch and Scotch-Irish element in the colonies was chiefly if not entirely secured by the teachings of John Witherspoon from his professor's chair in Nassau Hall. To him and John Dickinson, author of the "Farmer's Letters," belongs the credit of having convinced the sober middle classes of the great middle colonies that the breach with England was not merely inevitable but just, and to their interest.

But Witherspoon was more than a teacher, he was a practical statesman. His country seat was a farm on the southern slope of Rocky Hill, about a mile due north of Nassau Hall. Its solid stone walls still bear the classic name of Tusculum, which he gave it. In his hours of retirement at that beloved home he brooded, I fear, more on the rights of man than on human depravity, more on law than on theology, more on Providence in His present dealings with men than on the remoter meanings of God's word. In the convention which framed the constitution of New Jersey, he amazed the other delegates by his technical knowledge of administration and led in their constructive labors; he assisted in the overthrow of William Franklin, the royal governor; was elected to the Continental Congress, and in the critical hour spurred on the lagging members who hesitated to take the fatal step of authorizing their president and secretary to sign and issue the Declaration of Independence. With solemn emphasis he declared: "For my own part, of property I have some, of reputation more. That reputation is staked, that property is pledged on the issue of this contest; and although these gray hairs must soon descend into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather that they descend thither by the hand of the executioner, than desert at this crisis the sacred cause of my country."

The word "God" occurs but once in that famous document. Jefferson wrote it with a small "g." Witherspoon

was the solitary clergyman among the signers: neither he nor his neighbor, friend and supporter, Richard Stockton, of Morven, who was a member of his church, set their hands the less firmly to sign the paper. Finally, Witherspoon was a member of the secret committee of Congress which really found the means of moral and material support for the war down to its close. He was chosen in the dark hours of November, 1776, to confer with Washington on the military crisis; he was a member, with Richard Henry Lee and John Adams, of the committee appointed that same winter to fire the drooping spirits of the rebels when Congress was driven from Philadelphia to Baltimore. He was a member, too, of the boards of war and finance, wrote state papers on the currency, and framed many of the most important bills passed by the Continental Congress. It was not unnatural that, when at the close of the war Congress was terrified by unpaid and unruly Continentals battering at its doors in Philadelphia, it should seek refuge and council, as it did, in John Witherspoon's college.

Thus it happened that Nassau Hall became one of the hearthstones on which the fires of patriotism burned brightest. From 1766 to 1776 there were graduated two hundred and thirty young Americans. What their temper and feeling must have been may be judged from the names of those among them who afterwards became eminent in public life. Ephraim Brevard, Pierrepont Edwards, Churchill Houston, John Henry, John Beatty, James Linn, Frederick Frelinghuysen, Gunning Bedford, Hugh Brackinridge, Philip Freneau and James Madison; Aaron Burr, Henry Lee, Aaron Ogden, Brockholst Livingston and Wm. Richardson Davie. Those ten years produced twelve Princetonians who sat in the Continental Congress, six who sat in the Constitutional Convention, one President of the United States, one Vice-President, twenty-four Members of Congress, three judges of the Supreme Court, one Secretary of State, one Postmaster-

General, three Attorney-Generals, and two foreign ministers. It may well be supposed that the clergymen who were their comrades in those days of ferment were, like their great teacher, no opponents of political preaching. The influence of such a body of young men, when young men seized and held the reins, was incalculable.

"We have no public news," writes James Madison from Princeton on July 23, 1770, to his friend, Thomas Martin, "but the base conduct of the merchants in New York in breaking through their spirited resolutions not to import: a distinct account of which, I suppose, will be in the Virginia *Gazette* before this arrives. The letter to the merchants in Philadelphia, requesting their concurrence, was lately burned by the students of this place in the college yard, all of them appearing in their black gowns and the bell tolling. . . . There are about 115 in the College and in the Grammar School, all of them in American cloth."

"Last week to show our patriotism," wrote in 1774 another Princeton student, Charles Beatty, "we gathered all the steward's winter store of tea, and having made a fire in the campus we there burnt near a dozen pounds, tolled the bell, and made many spirited resolves. But this was not all. Poor Mr. Hutchinson's effigy shared the same fate with the tea, having a tea canister tied about his neck."

With such a nursery of patriotism at its very hub the temper of the surrounding community can easily be pictured. The proposition for a provincial congress came from Princeton. John Hart, a farmer from the neighboring township of Hopewell, and Abraham Clark, a farmer's son from the neighboring county, were associated with graduates from Princeton College and delegates from Princeton town in conducting its deliberations. Both were made delegates to the Continental Congress and both, along with Witherspoon and Stockton, were signers of the Declaration of Independence. Even Francis Hopkinson, the fifth signer for this State, a Philadelphian in reality, though a temporary

resident of Bordentown, was as the friend and co-worker of Freneau and Brackinridge intimately associated with Princeton influence. When rebellion was finally in full swing, the committee of safety for New Jersey held its sessions here, probably in Nassau Hall, possibly in the famous tavern. It is well known that neither the continental army nor the people of the United States at large were profoundly impressed by the Declaration of Independence. This was not the case in Princeton, for the correspondent of a Philadelphia paper wrote that on July 9, 1776, "Nassau Hall was grandly illuminated and independency proclaimed under a triple volley of musketry, and universal acclamation for the prosperity of the United States, with the greatest decorum."

Seven days previous to this demonstration, the Provincial Congress, sitting at Trenton, had adopted a new State constitution, nine days later the first Legislature of the State assembled in Nassau Hall—the College Library room—and chose Livingston governor. They continued more or less intermittently in session until the following October after the invasion of the State by British forces. Before the invaders they fled to Trenton, then to Burlington, to Pittstown, and finally to Haddonfield. After the battles of Princeton and Trenton they promptly returned to their first seat and resumed their sessions.

The storm of war broke upon Princeton early in December of the same year, 1776. The British army, landed from Howe's fleet in New York bay, had entirely worsted the American forces. Brooklyn, New York, Fort Washington with Fort Lee had been successively abandoned, and Washington in his memorable retreat across this State reached Princeton on the first of December. Stirling, with one thousand two hundred Continentals, was left as a rear guard, while the commander-in-chief with the rest, one thousand eight hundred, and his stores, pushed on to Trenton, whence

he crossed in safety to the right bank of the Delaware. On the seventh, Cornwallis entered the town at the head of six thousand Anglo-Hessian veterans, driving Stirling before him. The invaders were quartered in the College and in the church. Both Tusculum and Morven, the estates of the archrebels Witherspoon and Stockton, were pillaged, and the new house of Sergeant was burnt. All the neighboring farms were laid under contribution for forage.

Disaffection followed Washington's retreat. Large numbers of the people and many of the State officials accepted the English offers of amnesty. The patriots were compelled to abandon their homes and fly across the Delaware. Two regiments were left by Cornwallis in Princeton as a garrison. The rest of his troops were established in winter quarters at New Brunswick, Trenton and Bordentown. Washington's thin and starving line stretched along the Delaware from Coryell's Ferry to Bristol. Congress fled to Baltimore. Putnam, with no confidence in Washington's ability even to hold his ground, was making ready for a desperate defence of Philadelphia.

There was as yet no French alliance, no adequate supply of money raised either at home or abroad, no regular or even semi-regular army, nothing, apparently, but a disorderly little rebellion; for the first promise of constancy in New England and of regular support for a considerable force of volunteers had had as yet no fulfilment. The English felt that the early ardours of radical and noisy rebels would fade like a mist before Howe's success; Canada was lost, New York as far as the Highlands was in British hands, so also were New Jersey and Long Island, which latter virtually controlled Connecticut. Howe believed the rebellion was broken, Cornwallis had engaged passage to return home.

While the British were lulled into security Washington and the patriots though desperate were undaunted. A well considered and daring plan for a decisive sally from their

lines was formed and carried to a successful issue. On Christmas night two thousand four hundred men were ferried over the Delaware nine miles above Trenton; the crossing was most dangerous, owing to the swollen waters and the flowing ice; the ensuing march was made in spite of a dreadful storm. The affair at Trenton was scarcely a battle, it was rather a surprise; the one thousand two hundred Hessians were taken unawares and only a hundred and sixty-two escaped, nearly a thousand were captured. What made it the great event it was, was its electrical effect in restoring courage to patriots everywhere, together with the inestimable value to Washington's troops of the captured stores and arms. He did not occupy the captured place at all, but returned immediately to his encampment on the other shore to refit.

The ensuing week was certainly the most remarkable in our history. The English in New York were thrown into consternation. Cornwallis hastened back to Princeton where he collected between seven and eight thousand men, the flower of the British army. Washington's force, on the other hand, was reinforced with a speed and zeal bordering on the miraculous. Three thousand volunteers came in from the neighborhood and from Philadelphia. The term of service for nine hundred of his men would expire on New Year's day; these were easily induced, in the new turn of affairs, to remain six weeks longer. Washington and John Stark both pledged their private fortunes and Robert Morris raised fifty thousand dollars in Philadelphia. The mourning of the patriots throughout the Middle States was changed into rejoicing.

On the thirtieth of December the American army began to recross the Delaware; the movement was slow and difficult owing to the ice, but was completed the following day. On Jan. 1, 1777, Washington wrote from Trenton that he had about two thousand two hundred men with him, that Mifflin had about one thousand eight hundred men at Bordentown on the right wing and that Cadwalader had about as many

more at Crosswicks, some miles to the east. He thought that no more than one thousand eight hundred of those who passed the river with himself were available for fighting, but he intended to "pursue the enemy and break up their quarters."

Next day Cornwallis, leaving three regiments and a company of cavalry at Princeton, set out by the old king's highway for Trenton. At Maidenhead, now Lawrenceville, there was a skirmish between his van and the American outposts; thence for over five miles his march was harassed by irregular bodies of his foe, Gen. Hand being stationed in command of a detachment, at Shabbakong creek, and Gen. Greene about a mile this side of Trenton. It was four o'clock, and therefore late in the short winter day when the English general reached the outskirts of the city. There stood Washington himself with a few more detachments, ready still further to delay the British march through the town. Withdrawing slowly, the last continental crossed the bridge over the Assanpink in safety, to fall behind the earthworks, which in anticipation of the event had been thrown up and fortified with batteries on the high banks behind.

The British attacked at once, but were repulsed; undismayed they pressed on again, and again they were driven back across the narrow stream. The spirited conflict continued until nightfall, when the assailants finally gave up and withdrew to bivouac and renew the fight next morning. In this affair on the Assanpink about a hundred and fifty, mostly British, were killed. Cornwallis dispatched messengers to summon the men he had left at Maidenhead and Princeton, determined if possible to surround, overwhelm and annihilate Washington next day. But the battle on the Assanpink was destined to be the only real fighting in Trenton. Washington had in mind the strategic move which rendered this campaign one of his greatest. He determined to outflank his foe by a circuitous march to Princeton over the unguarded road on the south side of the Assanpink.

The night was dark and cold: the campfires of both lines burned strong and bright. Behind those of Cornwallis there was a bustle of preparation for the next day's battle; behind those of Washington there was a stealthy making ready for retreat. The baggage was packed and dispatched to Burlington; a few men were detached to keep the fires well fed and clear, the rest silently stole away about midnight. Their march was long, between sixteen and eighteen miles, and difficult because the frost had turned the mud on the roads into hummocks. But at sunrise on the third of January the head of the column had crossed Stony Brook by the bridge on the Quaker road, and stood about a mile and three-quarters from Princeton, awaiting the result of a council of war. They were masked by the piece of woods which is still standing behind the Quaker meeting house. It was determined that Washington with the main column should march across the fields, through a kind of depression in the rolling land intervening between the meeting-house and Princeton, in order to reach the town as quickly as possible. Mercer, with three hundred and fifty men and two field pieces, was to follow the road half a mile further to its junction with the King's highway, and there blow up the bridge over Stony Brook by which Cornwallis' reserve, marching to Trenton, must cross the stream. This would likewise detain Cornwallis himself on his return in pursuit.

There were three actions in the battle of Princeton. Two of the three English regiments left in reserve at Princeton, were under way betimes to join Cornwallis at Trenton. One of these under Col. Mawhood, with three companies of horse, had already crossed Stony Brook and had climbed the hill beyond before they descried Mercer following the road in the valley below; the other was half a mile behind, on this side the stream. Mawhood quickly turned back and, uniting the two, engaged Mercer. The Americans

were armed with rifles which had no bayonets, and although nearly equal in number to the enemy they were first slowly then rapidly driven up the hill to the ridge south of the king's highway and east of the Quaker road. They stood firm before the firing of the English, but yielded when the enemy charged bayonets. In this encounter Mercer was severely wounded and left for dead. Many other officers were likewise wounded as they hung back striving to rally the flying troops.

Washington, hearing the firing, stopped immediately and leaving the rest of his column to follow their line of march, put himself at the head of the Pennsylvania volunteers and wheeled. Summoning two pieces of artillery he turned northward to join the retreating force of Mercer. The British reached the crest of the hill in pursuit before they saw Washington's column. The sight brought them to a halt, and while they formed their artillery came up. It seemed to Washington a most critical moment. In an instant Mercer's command was fused with his own men, and placing himself well out before the line, he gave the order to advance. There was no halt until the commander himself was within thirty yards of the foe: at that instant both lines volleyed simultaneously. The fire was hasty and ineffective. Washington, as if by a miracle, was unscathed. As the smoke blew away, an American brigade came in under Hitchcock, while Hand with his riflemen attacked the British flank. In a few moments Mawhood gave up the fight; his troops after a few brave efforts broke and retreated over the hill up the valley of Stony Brook. The bridge was then destroyed.

Meantime the head of the American column had reached the outskirts of Princeton. There on the edge of the ravine now known as Springdale was posted still a third British force composed of soldiers from the 40th and 55th Line. The Americans, with Stark at their head, attacked and drove them back as far as Nassau Hall, into which the fugitives hastily threw themselves. From the windows scattered remnants of their

regiments could be seen flying through fields and by-ways toward New Brunswick. The American artillery began to play on the walls of the building; one ball, it is said, crashed through the roof and tore from its frame the effigy of George II., hanging in the Prayer Hall. A Princeton militiaman, with the assistance of his neighbors, finally burst the door and the little garrison surrendered.

When Donop retreated from Bordentown to Princeton after the battle of Trenton, he threw up an arrow-head breast-work at the point where now Mercer and Stoekton streets join; on this still lay a cannon of the size known as a thirty-two pounder, the carriage of which was dismantled. It was early morning when Cornwallis became aware that his expected battle would not be fought at Trenton; the roar of artillery gave him the terrible assurance that the blow had been struck on his weakened flank, that his precious stores at New Brunswick were in danger. Swiftly he issued the necessary orders and, just as Washington was leaving Princeton, appeared at the west end of the town on the King's highway, his van having been delayed in crossing Stony Brook. The citizens had loaded the gun in the breastwork and on the approach of the intruders they fired it. This utterly deceived the English generals, for they thought themselves facing a well-manned battery. It was an hour before they were undeeceived and in that precious interval Washington collected his army and marched away. His forces were too weak to risk the venture of seizing New Brunswick, even temporarily: accordingly he turned northwestward and reached Morristown in safety. There and at Middlebrook his headquarters practically remained for the rest of the war. The English were content to secure New Brunswick.

In the battle of Princeton there were engaged somewhat under 2,000 men on each side. The actual fighting lasted less than half an hour. We lost very few men—so few that the number cannot accurately be reckoned—possibly

30, but we lost a brave general, Hugh Mercer, a colonel, a major and three captains. The English soldiers fought with unsurpassed gallantry. They lost two hundred killed and two hundred and fifty captured, but no officers of distinction. It was not, therefore, a big fight, but it was none the less a great and decisive battle. How important Washington felt it to be, is attested by his personal exposure of himself. How decisive the great military critics have considered it, is shown by the fact that the campaign of which it was the finishing stroke is held by them to have been typical of his genius as a strategist. The two affairs of Trenton and Princeton are in our short histories generally reckoned together. And naturally so since they occurred so near to one another in time and place. But strategically and tactically examined, the battle of Trenton made good Washington's position behind the Delaware, the battle of Princeton secured New Jersey and the Middle States.

After the preliminary actions which took place in New England the remainder of the Revolution falls into three portions—the struggle for the Hudson, to secure communication between New England and the Middle States; the struggle for the Delaware, to secure communication between the Middle States and the South; and thirdly the effort to regain the South. After the battle of Princeton, Washington was able to establish a line from Amboy around by the west and south to Morristown; New England, the Middle and Southern States were in communication with each other and free. As a result of the first campaign by a numerous and well-equipped Anglo-German army the English held Newport in Rhode Island and New York City with posts at Kingsbridge on the North and at New Brunswick on the south. The proof was finally secured that Washington with a permanent army such as the colonies might, unassisted, have furnished him, would have been a match for any land force the English could have transported to America.

For the remaining years of the war Princeton was held by the Americans. Both the legislature of the State and the

Council of Safety held their meetings within its precincts; for a time Putnam was in command of the little garrison, for a time Sullivan. Early in 1781 thirteen hundred mutinous Pennsylvanians of Washington's army marched away from Morristown and came in a body to Princeton. They were met by emissaries from Clinton who strove to entice them from their allegiance. But though mutinous they were not traitors, for they seized the emissaries and handed them over to General Wayne to be treated as spies. A committee of Congress appeared and made such arrangements as pacified them. In the autumn of the same year the victory at Yorktown was celebrated with illuminations and general rejoicings. The College was again in session with forty students and local prosperity was restored. In 1782 there was held a meeting to support the continuance of the war.

The Revolutionary epoch was fitly brought to a close by a meeting of Congress in Nassau Hall. On June 20, 1783, three hundred Pennsylvania soldiers who were discontented with the terms of their discharge marched from Lancaster to Philadelphia and beset the doors of Congress, holding that assembly imprisoned for three hours under threat of violence if their wrongs were not redressed. The legislators resolved to adjourn to Princeton. They were made heartily welcome, the college halls were put at their disposal, and the houses of the citizens were hospitably opened for their entertainment. Their sessions were held regularly in the college library for over four months, until the fourth of November, when they adjourned to meet at Annapolis three weeks later. Washington was here twice during this time: once at commencement in September, when he made a present of fifty guineas to the trustees — a sum they laid out in the portrait by Peale which now hangs in Nassau Hall, filling, it is said, the very frame from which that of George II. was shot away during the battle. The second time he came in

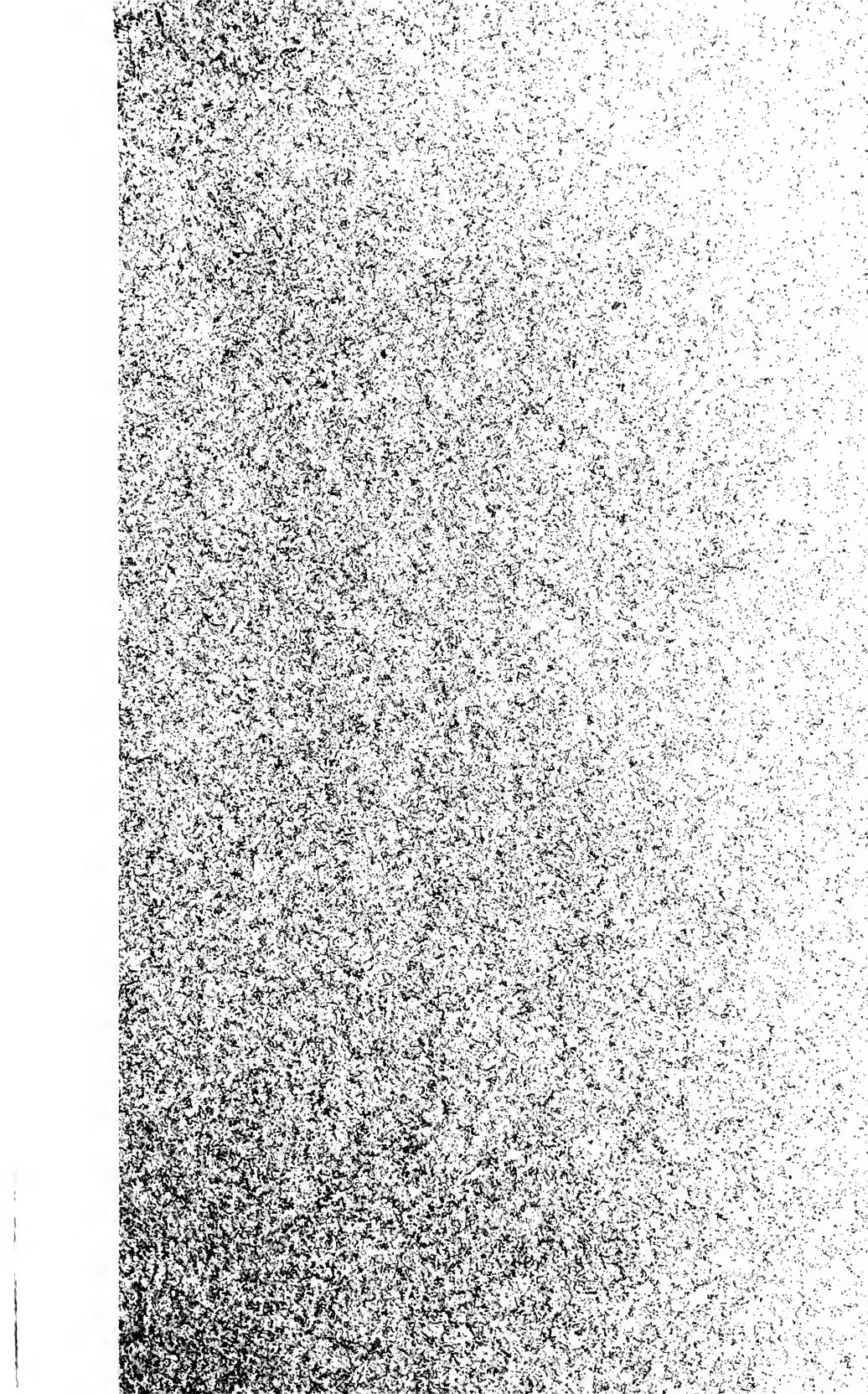
October, at the request of Boudinot, President of Congress, and a trustee of the College, to give advice concerning such weighty matters as the organization of a standing army to defend the frontiers, of a militia to maintain internal order, and of the military school. The Commander-in-chief was received in solemn session and congratulated by the President on the success of the war. He replied in fitting terms. According to tradition he occupied while in attendance on Congress a room in the house still standing in a dilapidated condition on the corner of Witherspoon and Nassau streets, but his residence was a stone house three miles away on the hill above the town of Rocky Hill. It was from that place that he issued his famous farewell address to the army.

But the greatest occasion in Princeton's history was on the thirty-first of the same month. Congress had assembled in the Prayer Hall to receive in solemn audience the minister plenipotentiary from the Netherlands. There were present besides the members Washington, Morris, the superintendent of finance, Luzerne, the French envoy, and many other men of eminence. The company had just assembled when news came that the Treaty of Peace had been signed at Versailles. Many brilliant and beautiful women were present, and their unchecked delight doubled the enthusiasm of all. The reception was the most brilliant public function thus far held by the now independent republic. On the twenty-fifth of November the British evacuated New York. Washington left Princeton to attend the ceremony, and afterward journeyed by Annapolis to his home at Mt. Vernon. He believed that, his military career being concluded, he was to spend the rest of his days as a private gentleman.

Providence had ordained otherwise. He had carried the difficult, strange and desultory war of the Revolution to a successful end; he had by wise counsel and firmness averted the dangers of a civil war which seemed imminent from the temper of those about his headquarters at Newburgh. Once more he was to enter the arena of embittered strife, but then

political and not military. Three of the five great actions in which he was personally present during the Revolution were fought on Jersey soil; his next leadership was displayed in a contest waged in Philadelphia, but largely by Jerseymen or Princetonians. Princeton's place in American history can not be understood without consideration of the Constitutional Convention, where the passions of localism, separatism and sectional prejudice broke forth afresh. The assembly contained many wise and far-seeing men. Of its fifty-five members, thirty-two were men of academic training. There were one each from London, Oxford, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, and five had been connected with the checkered fortunes of William and Mary. The University of Pennsylvania sent one, Columbia two, Harvard three, Yale four, and Princeton nine. The most serious dissension, as is well known, was concerning the relative importance of large and small States in legislation. The Virginia, or large State plan, was for two houses, basing representation in both on population. It was essentially the work of James Madison, a pupil of Witherspoon's. The Jersey, or small State, plan was for one house, wherein each State should have equal representation. It was the child of Paterson, another Princetonian. Over these two schemes the battle waged fiercely until it seemed that even Washington, the presiding officer, could not command peace or force a compromise: it was felt that the convention was on the verge of dissolution. Connecticut had ever been accustomed to two houses—one representing the people, one the towns. It was the compromise suggested on this analogy by Sherman and Ellsworth, and urged by them, with the assistance of Davie from Georgia, which finally prevailed. Ellsworth and Davie were both Princetonians. Madison joined hands with Washington in the successful struggle for the acceptance of the new constitution in Virginia—both Ellsworth and Paterson, their end attained, became the most ardent federalists.

Time, place and the men—these are the factors of history ; the first and the last vanish, the scenes alone remain. If history is to be felt, if you are to know in the concrete, from the experience of the men and women who have left the stage, what alone is possible for yourselves and your race, you do well to see and ponder the places which knew those who have gone before. Princeton will show you in Nassau Hall, a focus of patriotism—a cradle of liberty ; in her battlefield the spot where culminated one of the greatest campaigns of one of the greatest of generals—in that and in her sons the triumph of the moral forces which combine in true greatness. The lesson to be learned from Princeton's historic scenes should be that intellect and not numbers controls the world ; that ideas and not force overmaster bigness : that truth and right, supported by strong purpose and high principle, prevail in the end.



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